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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 November 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 novembre 2020

Report continued from volume A.

REPORT ON ONTARIO'S PROVINCIAL EMERGENCY RAPPORT SUR LA SITUATION D'URGENCE PROVINCIALE DE L'ONTARIO

Continuation of debate on the motion that the House take note of the Report on Ontario's Provincial Emergency from March 17, 2020, to July 24, 2020.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It is certainly a pleasure to rise after the member for—I believe it was Ottawa Orléans, if I'm not mistaken. But it is certainly funny hearing advice from the member for Ottawa Orléans with respect to how government should handle its projects. He talked about the flu vaccine—coming from a member who was in charge of a light rail transit construction project in Ottawa that was over budget, late and ultimately didn't work.

Having said that, there are a number of inconsistencies in what the member said. I didn't want to get up, but I felt compelled to get up and add a little bit to this. I would remind the gentleman, of course, that all of the initiatives that this government put in place from March right through to the end of the state of emergency were enthusiastically supported by the members opposite. I appreciate the fact that they supported us throughout the state of emergency. It was the right thing to do; it was the right thing to do for the people of the province of Ontario. Ultimately, it is what led to Ontario being ahead of almost every other jurisdiction in North America, globally one of the leaders in terms of flattening the curve, Mr. Speaker. When you look today at every single jurisdiction that surrounds us, whether it's in the United States, whether it's in Canada, every other jurisdiction is doing worse than the province of Ontario.

Now, the members opposite are critical of that, Mr. Speaker. I think that is a great success for the people of the province of Ontario. The member opposite from Ottawa Orléans is critical of the advice that the health table gave us. I'm a little less critical of the health table. I recognize the fact that the Chief Medical Officer of Health was actually appointed by the previous Liberal government, and I think he's doing a great job. He's done a great job, Mr. Speaker, in getting us to the point where we are: ahead of almost every other jurisdiction in the world.

Where was this member when we on this side of the House, when our Premier, when every Premier across this

country was begging for action from the federal government on rapid tests? Did this member get up in his place and say anything about that? Nothing—not a peep, Mr. Speaker. Where was this member when we needed better border controls, when Premiers across this country were asking for better controls at our borders because there was so much that was coming across at our airports? Our Premier was asking for support; the Premier of every province across this country was asking for support. Where was the member and his caucus? Absent—absent, Mr. Speaker. They were not there.

Mr. Ian Arthur: A motion of confidence.

1800

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you. The member for Kingston is right. Where was he? He was supporting a motion of confidence in the government of Ontario, led by the Premier. That was the contribution of the Liberal Party. In fact, when we made all of the changes that we've made in this place, the first item of business when this House came back wasn't a motion from the Liberals with respect to long-term care. It wasn't a motion with respect to flu shots. It wasn't a motion with respect to health care. It wasn't a motion with respect to public health. It was a motion of confidence in the government and what it had done for months. That member enthusiastically got up in his place, walked out of this room and voted in favour of that. In fact, every member of this place unanimously—the first time in the history of the province of Ontario, that opposition party took their moment, their moment to shine, their moment to bring anything they wanted forward. What does he bring forward? What did the Liberals bring forward? Their confidence in the province of Ontario. And I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

But let's look at the Liberal record. He talks about long-term care. Were there challenges in long-term care? Absolutely, there were challenges in long-term care. For many of us, and I suspect on both sides of the House, one of the reasons that we ran was because we saw what was happening in health care; we saw what was happening in long-term care. I had a 118-year waiting list in my riding for long-term care after 15 years of Liberal government—118 years—and this member has the nerve to get up in his place and be critical of the people who work inside long-term care? I think that the member should actually look at his party's record.

And what have we done? After being elected, we immediately sought out to build long-term care in this province because we knew we had to move very quickly, and we did that. We immediately set out to reform health care in this province, because we knew that after 15 long years

of Liberal cuts and mismanagement we had to do better in health care, and we did. We moved to Ontario health teams. The impact of that in a riding like mine was felt at Participation House and was felt at Markhaven Home, a long-term-care home. The exact thing that we were doing, the exact thing that we were transitioning to, is what we did.

Markham Stouffville Hospital stepped up, stepped in and helped Participation House. They helped Markhaven Home, Mr. Speaker. And do you know what? That member and his party voted against that transition. They voted against what now they are saying was a great thing. It was the results, and that's what they wanted, but they voted against it. But it worked—it worked.

What was the legacy of the Liberal government? They left a province that had to go begging all over the world to try to find N95 masks and to find PPE. Where are we today? A supply right here in the province of Ontario; 15 years of failure from the Liberals left us in a position where we had to go beg, borrow and do whatever we could to make sure that we had the appropriate PPE. That's no longer the case in the province of Ontario.

Our small, medium and large enterprises: Have they had a challenging time? Absolutely, they've had a challenging time—across the country. And the member opposite might be critical of the co-operation between this government and other levels of government, our municipal and our federal partners. But although I am very critical of some of the things that the Liberal government did with respect to rapid testing, some of the things that they did not do with respect to protecting our borders, we did work together, because we understood, as much as the Liberals don't seem to understand, that the province had to move quickly to make sure that our health care system could handle COVID-19. So federal government supports in direct transfers to individuals allowed us to put that support and that funding into health care, not only in the province of Ontario but across the country, which has allowed us to flatten the curve, to get prepared.

The members opposite talk about education. We have close to two million students—close to two million students—and almost all of them, 99% of them, are in school and learning. They can say that that's not a success? I think it is, Mr. Speaker. And it's not a success of this government; it's a success of the people. It's a success of parents. It's a success of students, boards of education, teachers, who transitioned quickly to make sure that our students had access to top-quality education. I see it in my own home.

Are teachers tired? Yes, you're darn right they're tired. They're tired because they're also parents. They're also part of a pandemic. Are our doctors tired? Yes, they're tired. Are Ontarians tired? Do they want to move on from COVID? Yes, obviously, they do, but they still understand that they're not going to be able to do that until we can progress out of this, until we have a vaccine.

But if you look at what the province of Ontario has accomplished—and it wasn't just accomplished because of members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker; it was

what all of us have accomplished. We have a Legislature that never stopped sitting. Put that in comparison to everybody else, Mr. Speaker. While the members opposite were talking about taking months and months off and adjourning early in the summer, we said, "No, we're going to sit through here and we're going to debate things." We are here in cohorts, keeping this place going. We're not having a Zoom Parliament; we're debating the emergency, the state of emergency, Mr. Speaker. We're debating the state of emergency, because that's what an accountable government does.

On every single thing when it comes to COVID-19, this government, this Premier and, by extension, this Legislature have led this country. And they should be proud of what has been accomplished in the province of Ontario; all of us should be proud of what we've accomplished in the province of Ontario. We have a stronger economy than most every other province. We have a health care system that is ready to handle a second wave. We have a long-term-care system that is better positioned than it has ever been before. We have schools, a vast majority, where our kids are learning, and we have small, medium and large enterprises that have stepped up to fill the gaps in PPE. That was not the case in the first wave, Mr. Speaker.

Is there more to do? You're absolutely right, 100%, there is more to do. But Ontario will continue to be a leader—not only in Canada, but globally—even if the members opposite don't join us, and we will do all that we can to strive and make sure that the failures of the previous Liberal government are never repeated in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to put a few comments on the record regarding the take-note debate on the Report on Ontario's Provincial Emergency from March 17, 2020, to July 24, 2020.

The report starts by stating, "On March 17, 2020, based on the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health..., the Ontario government declared a provincial emergency under s. 7.0.1(1) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act...." It goes on to say, "Once the provincial emergency was declared, Ontario created orders under s. 7 ... of the EMCPA and amended them in consultation with, or based on the advice of, the Chief Medical Officer of Health...."

It goes on to say, "On April 27, 2020, Ontario released A Framework for Reopening our Province.... This framework outlined the criteria the Chief Medical Officer of Health ... used to advise the government on loosening of public health measures as necessary...."

"All orders were developed based on public health information available at the time with the intent of addressing COVID-19 challenges while limiting intrusiveness. The province considered the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health...."

It goes on to say, "The order was needed to limit the transmission of COVID-19 by closing the establishments, outlined in this order, where groups of people may have

gathered. The order was enacted based on public health advice, including the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health."

It goes on to say, "Organized public events, certain gatherings:... The order was needed to limit the transmission of COVID-19 across Ontario given the risk of transmission in gatherings of groups of individuals. The order was enacted based on public health advice, including the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health." Pretty much on every page of this document, they talk about the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. But, Speaker, did you know that Ontario is the only province where the Chief Medical Officer of Health is accountable to both the Minister of Health and the Legislative Assembly? In every other province, including Canada, they report to the assembly directly.

That's why today I tabled a bill that would bring transparency to public health decision-making. We need to remove the political interference from public health if we are to collectively overcome COVID-19. As Dr. David Fisman just tweeted, "None of us should want a CMOH who is more responsive to the short term demands of political interests than to the long term health of Ontarians." And it goes on.

1810

While all of this was going on, and every page of the report tells us that those decisions were made with the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, none of us ever heard that advice. None of us ever had the direct access to the Chief Medical Officer of Health that happened in every other province.

I'm sure you have all seen the Chief Medical Officer of Health from the province of BC. In BC, the Chief Medical Officer of Health reports to the Legislative Assembly. She was the one who told people what was going to be closed and open and how life was going to change under COVID, not a politician. When she gave advice, she spoke directly to the people. In Ontario, none of that happened. All of the good advice that Dr. Williams gave was given to the Ministry of Health. What was that advice? We will never know, Speaker. What we will know is that the government made 67 pages' worth of decisions based on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, advice that we will never know. This has to change. Our Chief Medical Officer of Health has to respond to the Legislative Assembly—not be accountable to both the Minister of Health and the Legislative Assembly, because right now, we are the big losers.

My bill also says that if there's ever a pandemic or another public health emergency where emergency measures are needed, then a committee of MPPs, a committee of the Legislature, would be formed so that the Legislature can be informed of the decisions made by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. This is one of the lessons learned.

Second is the equity lens. We all know that Black, Indigenous and people of colour have been impacted by the pandemic way more than others. But yet, we still do not collect race-based data. So when the government said, "We made decisions based on data. We made decisions

based on evidence," the data does not exist for Black, Indigenous and people of colour in Ontario. So we know that none of those decisions were made with data that included them because we do not collect data on them. This is a shame. This is something that has to change. This is something that our health care system has asked to change for a long time, this is something the NDP has stood for, for a long time, and this is something that the government failed to do, with drastic consequences that include deaths of workers.

The third thing that they could have done way better had to do with the pandemic pay. When the pandemic pay was announced, that was a good-news announcement. We all clapped. We were all happy. They were calling them heroes. Yes, absolutely—people on the front line, who went and cared for people who were or might have been infected with COVID were all heroes. But it looks like the Premier just named a few health care workers he knew. He knew nurses, and that was it. And he knew PSWs.

Shortly thereafter, we were able to include respiratory therapists. They are the ones who put you on and maintain you on a respirator when you are in the ICU. We were able to add the emergency workers, the paramedics. But many, many others who worked on the front line, who worked in the ICU, who worked with people who had COVID, were not included.

In my hospital, the renal aides—they are PSWs with extra training—everybody in the renal unit—the nurses, everybody—was included. But because they had taken extra training, because they were not called PSWs anymore, they were not included. The same thing with the lab techs, the same thing with the physiotherapists, the same thing with a whole bunch of people who work in the ICU—they were not included. So something that should have been a good-news announcement actually created divisiveness in a time where it was all hands on deck. It created human resources conflicts. It's not too late to do the right thing. Go back and include those people who were on the front line, who helped bring back to health people infected with COVID. They deserve the pandemic pay.

Then, something that is close to my heart is the \$31 million for broadband, of which zero dollars went out. Do you know what that meant, Speaker? It meant that, in my riding, the little schools all have high-speed Internet. Nobody else has it, so teachers would park in the parking lot of the school, next to the school, so that they could connect to the WiFi. I want you to think about this: It was March. You could see them because they're inside their car. Their car would be all covered in condensation, because they'd been in there for so long. Because that was the only way they could connect with their students, by parking in the parking lot of the school, when really, we had \$31 million for broadband?

In Foleyet, in my riding, we have a brand new cell tower that can give you access to WiFi, but the price was so high, nobody could afford it. But yet, in Toronto they made arrangements so that all of the kids—not all of the kids, but some of the kids—made arrangements so that a different brand of cell service helped.

In the north, we asked for—there's not a whole bunch of kids. I think there are 28 kids who go to the school in Foleyet. It wouldn't have been that hard to help those 18 families. Some have two or three kids, so 18 families, 28 kids—it wouldn't have been that hard to make sure that everybody in Foleyet had high-speed Internet. I asked. I begged. I went to the minister. I went to everybody. No, they were not interested. They can sit in the parking lot of the school, connect to the WiFi, freeze to death in their car. Nobody cared. We could have done better for the people of Foleyet, we could have done better for the students of Foleyet, but we didn't.

The same thing goes on with the testing. The long list went on, and I see that the time is gone. I still had a lot to say. We could have done better, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Mr. Speaker, good evening. I'm thankful for the opportunity to speak to the report provided by the Ontario government on their continuous use of emergency powers over the last eight and a half months. This is an unprecedented discussion we are having here today. There is a lot to discuss and a lot that concerns me in this report, and concerns many across Ontario.

I'm concerned about the precedent that we, as elected public servants representing the voters, have and continue to set on our future generations on how our democracy operates and what our government can and cannot do. For 232 consecutive days since March 17, 2020, the executive branch of this Ontario government has had the ability to apply emergency powers on Ontario citizens without justification. For more than 100 consecutive days, the executive branch of our Ontario government has had this emergency power without having to come back to this House for a debate or vote on this issue: a truly unprecedented overreach of government, a power grab that we have never seen before in the 153-year history of this Legislature.

This government initially told us that the use of emergency powers was necessary for a couple of weeks, just to make sure our health care system wasn't overwhelmed. Two weeks turned to four, then eight, then 16. We are soon going to approach a full calendar year of this government exercising emergency powers on Ontario residents, based on decisions made behind closed doors without having to bring these decisions here in this Legislature to present, debate, defend and vote on.

When Bill 195 was originally presented, we were told that in exchange for having the right to debate, discuss and vote on these emergency powers in this Legislature and at committee, the government would be providing us with a report that we could see and talk about. That report was provided to us this week, entitled the Report on Ontario's Provincial Emergency. I hate to say it, but it is a sad and sorry replacement for the government subjecting itself to scrutiny, for applying powers that have traditionally been required to be discussed in this Legislature. The report does not provide much of anything that isn't already out there. It is less of a report and more like a consolidation.

A real report would have included data that the government used in its decision-making, the result of the impact in terms of COVID-19 cases, in terms of fatality, in terms of the impact on our economy and our health care system. This report provides none of that.

This is what I feared when I was faced with a choice to vote for or against Bill 195. When I was faced with the choice of whether or not I vote in favour of handing over my right to vote as a member of provincial Parliament to this government for the next year on their unprecedented use of emergency powers, I feared that the decisions were going to be made in secret, without providing the public or this Legislature with enough rationale. More importantly, I feared the decisions could possibly be made on a whim, without much thought or consideration for the consequences.

1820

Therein lies the real, poisonous impact of the use of emergency powers by the executive branch of government for such an extended time. Mr. Speaker, it isn't about right or left politics, or being right or wrong; it's about whether or not we believe that government has to debate, discuss and defend its ideas and decisions, whether that scrutiny that this Legislature is supposed to provide—does that result in better or worse policy-making? Or, at the very least, does the scrutiny make it possible for the government to consider unintended consequences that may arise in decisions they may make on a whim? That is the key behind what we are discussing.

Unfortunately, the tribal nature of right and left politics has us not wanting to listen to other opinions or other points of view, and what does that get us? By insulating itself from scrutiny on its decisions, this government has shown that policy-making is worse off and policy-setting does not improve. Drastic regulatory orders that micro-manage people's lives should not be permitted to be made swiftly in a closed-door meeting without scrutiny, and some would say that some of those decisions should not be made at all by governments—ever. That is what rights and freedoms are supposed to be about.

With Bill 195 and this government's use of emergency powers, we have turned this concept on its head. Now the executive branch of government gets to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants, right across Ontario, without scrutiny. Let's look at some examples of how this government's decision-making has left people worse off in Ontario because they refuse to listen to other points of view, refuse to be transparent and refuse to face any scrutiny.

I start by looking at some of the concerning language used in the report that shows the perspective and philosophy taken by this government in handling COVID-19. In its report, the government defends shutting down businesses across Ontario, different types of businesses, based on what the government deemed at various times to be essential. No definition of "essential" is ever provided. So, on the one hand, the government believes everything it can do to micromanage people's lives and the rights and liberties they interfere with is all essential; on the other hand, they believe that some jobs are essential and others

are not. But to the person losing their job, every job is essential.

Let's look at how quickly the government decided one service is essential when another was not. Regulation 128/20 decided to allow for curbside pickup of cannabis on April 7, 2020, at a time when all places of worship were still closed and most businesses were not open. That was a government decision, that cannabis be deemed essential while other services were not.

Second, throughout this report the government uses the words "reasonable measure" to defend its powers, but we are not provided with the other options the government had to consider. Without the other options, there is no way for us to consider whether certain actions were reasonable or not. The report provides little detail on whether or not measures were effective or not. We are not provided with specific data showing where COVID-19 cases were spreading and where they were not. We are not provided with the data to tell us whether restrictions imposed on people's liberty are working. This report does not provide the public with transparency on government decisions or the data. I'm left to think that the reason is because the government doesn't have the rationale or the data, because the government is flying blind.

All we know is that province-wide shutdowns have been implemented on different services in the public and private sectors, and we know that months later, COVID cases began to increase again with the introduction of the flu season and back-to-school. The lack of transparency, coupled with the fact that to any Ontarian it looks like this use of emergency powers is not getting rid of COVID-19, would make it easy for anyone to wonder whether these measures work to stop the spread or whether their purpose was for some other reason.

If the purpose of these measures was primarily to not overwhelm our health care system, we should just say that and then the discussion should be, "How do we fix the health care system?", because continuing to shut down sectors of our economy is going to overwhelm our health care system in another way: with a lack of funding in the long term.

There are other orders summarized in this report that also provide unprecedented encroachments on the civil liberties of Ontario residents, that have not been subject to sufficient scrutiny because of Bill 195. Take regulation 114/20. In one executive decision, people had to grant their ID to a provincial offences officer when enforcing orders under the act, but right in the report it says the common law says the person is not required to give that information unless compelled by the Legislature and unless reasonable grounds existed. In one pen stroke, this government crushed those civil liberties in the name of fighting COVID. The justification was that the information was needed to enforce orders, but the obvious question is, when you are micromanaging everyone's lives, isn't it impossible to enforce such orders in a consistent way?

These are just some of the examples of the government's overreach on the rights and civil liberties of

Ontario residents in the name of solving a problem they have not specifically defined, without the necessary goals laid out, without the scrutiny of this Legislature. We have set a dangerous precedent, and that is why I do not regret for one minute voting against Bill 195. Some political types ask me, "Was it worth fighting on that hill?" I say to them that I'm not quite sure what other hill would be left to fight on.

We have put in the hands of the executive branch, in one meeting, the ability to micromanage people's lives, to dictate an intrusion on privacy, to tell people how many people can come over for Thanksgiving, which businesses will close and where, that children over two have to wear a mask, to cancel certain medical treatments, to close and reopen, to set prices—all decisions made without the data to back them up, without a healthy debate and discussion and scrutiny, and all in the name of reducing the spread of COVID-19 that this government isn't even sure it can contain at this point, because it did not push the federal government to act quick enough to contain the virus coming in from the border at the outset.

This government acted slowly, the federal government acted slowly and, in response, we have a solution proposed that is a government-imposed massive power grab that has done away with civil liberties and done away with the function of this Legislature. These decisions were and continue to be unreasonable. They continue to be made without much thought. They are being made based on public pushback and polling, and not on debate of policy options or data. The decisions continue to harm the livelihood of Ontario residents and their health. The cure is increasingly looking worse than the disease.

Finally, these measures have set a precedent that puts the democratic system in this province and the function of this Legislature, two things that we take for granted, at risk.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M. John Fraser: Le Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence a reçu le mandat de fournir aux Ontariennes et Ontariens la justification du gouvernement pour prolonger les ordonnances d'urgence COVID-19. Les ordonnances ont été prolongées trois fois depuis la formation du comité, le plus récemment jusqu'au 21 novembre.

Monsieur le Président, les Ontariennes et les Ontariens attendent de la transparence de leur gouvernement. Les Ontariennes et Ontariens méritent d'entendre quels conseils le premier ministre et son gouvernement reçoivent, quand cet avis a été donné et les preuves qui sous-tendent ces recommandations. Ils devraient entendre directement les membres de la table de commandement de la COVID-19 et avoir la possibilité de poser des questions sur leurs conseils et recommandations.

Le premier ministre a le pouvoir de désigner des membres de la table de commandement de la COVID-19 pour comparaître devant le Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence sous forme d'audience publique pour faire une présentation sur

les conseils fournis au premier ministre et son gouvernement, suivies de questions des membres du comité. Pour le bien de la transparence et de l'équité, le premier ministre devrait désigner des membres de la table de commandement de la COVID-19 pour comparaître devant le Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence sous la forme d'une audience publique.

Les familles de l'Ontario méritent d'entendre comment ces décisions ont été prises. Ils méritent des comptes.

Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to take part in the take-note debate. I do want to take note of something that the government House leader said, that we supported every measure that had to do with the pandemic since March. I do want to remind him: There have been a number, but Bill 195, which the member just spoke about, was one of the things that we did oppose, and it was around the government's taking out of this Legislature the ability to debate, vote and have a full public debate on this when we change measures. The committee—and I'll get into this in a little bit—is not quite what we expect select committees to be.

My request is simple, and you've heard it a few times before: that the Premier designate members of his command table to appear before the committee at our next scheduled meeting. It's important for transparency and clarity, so people can understand the measures that this government has taken. Ontarians, their families, their businesses and everyone who has been affected by COVID-19 deserve to know what advice the Premier is getting, when that advice is given and the evidence that was used to underpin those recommendations. It's a simple and straightforward request.

1830

The way that the motion is written, it is actually in the Premier's power to be able to designate anyone he wants to appear before the committee. That's how the motion is written, so it's up to him—nobody else, not us; the Premier—and there's nothing preventing him from doing it.

I do appreciate being included on the select committee, although the parameters of the committee, as I've said earlier, are extremely limited. Comments of both the government and opposition members are noted, but as opposition members we can't provide a dissenting report. The committee consists of oral presentations by the minister—mostly the Solicitor General so far, on the last three occasions—and several rounds of questioning, but there's no documentation distributed before the meeting other than reports that are written and then reviewed and then sent here. That's the only paper that comes out of the committee, which is a little unusual for this place. We don't even get a copy of the Solicitor General's remarks before the meeting. It's not a big request. It would help us in posing our questions. As I said, it's really unusual that we have a committee where we don't get that kind of documentation.

The regulations that are being imposed on people go at their basic civil rights, whether it's to gather or whether

it's to operate a business, because the government can close down a business, close their places of worship, not allow them to gather and impose stiff penalties for noncompliance. They're infringements on people's personal liberties; we do it to protect public safety, and that's our most important responsibility here, but we also have to get the public buy-in on it, so we have to have a level of transparency. Just because we're doing it in the name of public safety doesn't mean it doesn't bear scrutiny, the kind of scrutiny that happens with just about everything else we do in this place.

While I appreciate the opportunity to speak in the assembly, we're not going to vote on this tonight. I can't express, other than in my words, my displeasure or agreement with the government, or any comment, any suggestion—I can do that. But I won't be able to vote on this tonight. I do appreciate the opportunity, though.

I do want to say something somewhat related to this, but that has been really following me around for about the last two or three weeks, because I haven't heard an answer, so I put an order paper question in. Here's the question, and if anybody has an answer, come and see me after the debate, because I really would like the answer. The flu shot was the number-one plank that came out in the COVID-19 plan. Okay, yes, that's a good thing. That's a great thing. It's part of a plan. What I need to understand is, there are 14 million-plus Ontarians. We ordered five and a half million flu shots—5.1 million. I won't bicker over it; I know we may find another 650,000, so maybe we'll get to 6 million.

I need to understand the methodology that was used in determining how many flu shots were ordered. I can't, for the life of me, figure out what it is other than somebody picking a number, because in actual fact, if you look at the flu shots, enough were ordered for what was happening in a regular year in Ontario—some more but around 34% or 35%. I thought the point was that we were trying to get people to a higher number. I'd like to get an explanation for that, so if anybody has a good explanation, I'm around here after the debate. I'll hang around. I'd love to hear it. I know my order paper question will take about a month; I'd like to get it sooner than that. I don't think it's that hard. It doesn't sound to me like it's a really complex equation so far. But I'd like to see it.

I just want to finish by saying again that I appreciate the opportunity to speak in debate tonight, and I appreciate all the members' comments. I just think the simplest thing for the Premier to do with the COVID-19 table is to have them appear before the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight. It would do a lot to clear the air and build public confidence. I understand why we're making the decisions—why we are, because we are together in this, and the government has got the responsibility for it, but people are looking at us. They don't make a distinction. So I think it's fair for them to know because, quite frankly, I have some concerns around the fact that we seem to be two steps behind, two weeks behind, two months behind, in making important decisions at the start of the school year.

Anyway, Speaker, I'm just about out of time. I appreciate very much your attention, because I think I've had yours. And I thank my colleagues for their attention as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: La COVID-19 a révélé nos faiblesses, mais nous a offert aussi l'opportunité de concentrer nos efforts pour les corriger, si nous avons le courage de le faire.

Cette pandémie a révélé un sous-investissement, une pénurie de personnel et un manque de surveillance dans bon nombre de nos foyers de soins de longue durée, ce qui a entraîné la perte de milliers d'Ontariennes et d'Ontariens vivant dans les établissements de soins. Cette perte ne doit pas être en vain, et le moment est venu d'apporter les améliorations nécessaires à notre système de soins de santé et d'écouter les experts du milieu afin que les conditions de travail des préposés aux bénéficiaires reflètent l'important travail qu'ils accomplissent et leur rôle important de soutien auprès de nos êtres chers.

Cette pandémie a révélé les faiblesses de nos services sociaux, alors que les Ontariennes et les Ontariens vulnérables qui dépendent du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées se sont retrouvés avec une fraction des ressources mises à la disposition des bénéficiaires de subventions fédérales du CERB. Cela a rendu difficile, voire impossible, de s'en sortir pour des milliers d'Ontariennes et d'Ontariens vivant avec des conditions préexistantes qui les ont rendus particulièrement vulnérables pendant cette crise de santé publique.

Le moment est venu de réformer le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées pour faire en sorte que les bénéficiaires puissent vivre dans la sécurité et la dignité auxquelles ils ont droit. Ce n'est pas le moment de récupérer la petite augmentation des prestations d'urgence qui a été supprimée avant le début de la deuxième vague.

COVID-19 has exposed our weaknesses but offered us an opportunity to focus our efforts to fix them if we have the courage to do so. This pandemic has exposed under-investment, staffing shortages and a lack of oversight in many of our long-term-care homes, which resulted in the preventable loss of thousands of Ontarians living in care. Now is the time to ensure that the victims of this tragedy are given the justice they deserve and that we are improving working conditions for the PSWs and care home residents rather than granting long-term-care operators broad protections from negligence lawsuits.

This pandemic has even exposed the weakness in the way we work together in this Legislature. Omnibus bills, nominally for COVID-19, have been rushed through this House without proper oversight. These bills have, among other things, attempted to quietly let a hate-monger and public friend of the Premier run a university and to remove the ability of municipalities to choose the best form of election to enhance democratic participation in the way they see fit. Scheduled public consultations on bills have been cancelled so legislation can be passed as orders in council, and environmental assessments are now being

quietly skipped to allow for the destruction of provincially significant wetlands across the province.

This is not leadership. This is not governance. And it is not representative of the values that Ontarians across this province have demonstrated by coming together and helping their communities throughout this pandemic.

Notre province étant confrontée à un nombre record de nouveaux cas quotidiens et à une baisse du nombre de tests, le moment est venu de concentrer nos efforts sur la résistance à la deuxième vague de la pandémie et la résolution des problèmes systémiques exposés par la première vague.

Il est maintenant temps de veiller à ce que les bénéficiaires du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées obtiennent le revenu dont ils ont besoin pour vivre en toute sécurité et d'investir dans la dotation et la surveillance appropriées des foyers de soins de longue durée.

Il est maintenant temps de remédier aux arriérés de réparation des écoles et d'investir dans les enseignants afin que les écoles aient les ressources nécessaires pour se conformer à la distanciation sociale et aux limites de rassemblement dictées par nos experts de la santé.

Il est maintenant temps d'améliorer les protections et la surveillance médicales dans nos prisons provinciales confrontées aux épidémies de COVID-19, et d'investir dans une stratégie inclusive de logement abordable, et de ne pas utiliser la pandémie comme couverture pour poursuivre un agenda non lié à la crise.

With our province facing record high numbers of new daily cases and falling testing numbers, now is the time to focus our efforts on weathering the second wave of the pandemic and fixing the systemic issues exposed by the first wave.

Now is the time to ensure that ODSP recipients have the income they need to live safely and to invest in proper staffing and oversight for long-term-care homes.

Now is the time to address repair backlogs for schools and invest in teachers so schools have the resources to actually comply with the government's social distancing and gathering limits.

Now is the time to improve medical protections and oversight in our provincial jails facing COVID-19 outbreaks, and to invest in an inclusive affordable housing strategy, not to use the pandemic as cover to pursue ulterior motives.

What's particularly frustrating is that the government has been sitting on the money to do these things. As our province's Financial Accountability Officer exposed, we have underspent funds, nearly \$6.7 billion in funds, directly allocated for the COVID-19 response. This austerity costs lives, and is symbolic of a lack of courage needed to acknowledge our mistakes and bring systemic change to save people's lives.

Le budget provincial qui sera présenté demain démontrera dans quelle mesure le gouvernement prend ses obligations envers les citoyens de l'Ontario. Nous sommes tous en droit de nous attendre à des investissements importants et significatifs pour mettre en place des mesures concrètes pour la protection de tous ceux qui ont

été affectés de façon disproportionnée par la pandémie. L'opportunité du prochain budget démontrera la volonté du gouvernement à réparer les injustices qui ont été mises en lumière au cours de ces derniers mois.

By definition, an emergency is an exception. When we extend emergency powers without proper oversight and collaboration, we make emergencies the status quo and remove the checks and balances that are in place for good reason. We know that this emergency is especially unpredictable and requires a significant response. However, it does not require an undermining of democracy.

We all want the same thing: to support Ontarians through this incredibly challenging situation. If this government believes in accountability and democracy, they will allow us to effectively do our work of providing oversight in this Legislature. This means engaging in meaningful debate. This means not centralizing power and

not making unilateral decisions without proper oversight. This means supporting bills and amendments that make important impacts.

When we collaborate, we can do fantastic work together and ensure that we're supporting as many of our constituents as possible. Party lines do not help individuals and families through a pandemic. Effective collaboration, productive debate and transparency are especially important right now. I urge this government to consider how a change in culture in this Legislature could benefit our province now and for the years to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate? Seeing none, I declare the debate concluded.

This House now stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1844.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
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Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB) French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC) Gates, Wayne (NDP) Gélinas, France (NDP) Ghamari, Goldie (PC) Gill, Parm (PC) Glover, Chris (NDP) Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton Niagara Falls Nickel Belt Carleton Milton Spadina—Fort York Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Oxford	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC) Harden, Joel (NDP) Harris, Mike (PC) Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Kitchener—Conestoga York South—Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Hatfield, Percy (NDP) Hillier, Randy (IND) Hogarth, Christine (PC) Horwath, Andrea (NDP) Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Windsor—Tecumseh Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston Etobicoke—Lakeshore Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Scarborough—Guildwood	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC) Kanapathi, Logan (PC) Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND) Karpache, Bhutila (NDP) Ke, Vincent (PC) Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	Dufferin—Caledon Markham—Thornhill Cambridge Parkdale—High Park Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord Barrie—Innisfil	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Solicitor General / Solliciteur générale
Khanjin, Andrea (PC) Kramp, Daryl (PC) Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC) Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	King—Vaughan Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC) Mamakwa, Sol (NDP) Mantha, Michael (NDP) Martin, Robin (PC) Martow, Gila (PC) McDonell, Jim (PC) McKenna, Jane (PC)	Nepean Kiiwetinoong Algoma—Manitoulin Eglinton—Lawrence Thornhill Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry Burlington Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC) Miller, Norman (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC) Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP) Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

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Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Andrea Khanjin, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

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Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Dave Smith
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Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
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Robin Martin, Norman Miller
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
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Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
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Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
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Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell